

## **II. THE DESIGNATION PROCESS...BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE CLEAN CITIES NETWORK**

The process of becoming a designated Clean Cities coalition is just that...a process. It takes time to gather the “key market players,” secure their commitments as stakeholders, develop an organizational structure, and determine goals and priorities – and all that is before you start developing your program plan! Coalitions will often spend more than a year planning meetings, gathering the necessary stakeholder support, and working to build a market foundation before they submit a program plan. The program plan is essentially your “application” for Clean Cities designation. It is your market development plan, and also serves as a way for you to illustrate the support and market foundation that has grown from the Clean Cities effort building in your community.

The bells and whistles of the designation ceremony come after your program plan has been approved by the national program staff. It is when you and the other coalition stakeholders ceremoniously solidify your commitments (although it’s a non-binding contract) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Clean Cities designation recognizes a coalition’s demonstrated commitment to the use of alternative fuels and vehicles – it’s one way to publicly acknowledge the efforts of stakeholders, generate “good PR,” and increase the visibility of the coalition and alternative fuels.

### **The Road to Clean Cities**

The following required steps will lead you to a Clean Cities designation:

#### **(1) Stakeholder Meetings**

Stakeholders are those entities that can facilitate the implementation of desired AFV programs. Having representatives of these entities participate early in the process is essential for garnering support and minimizing opposition. The most effective coalitions maintain a healthy balance of public and private sector participants, including city officials and local government representatives, state officials (particularly State Energy Office representatives), fuel suppliers, automaker and local dealership representatives, private fleet managers, environmental groups, and local universities.

**\*Note\***      **Special emphasis must be placed on private sector fleets, as participation from “niche market” fleets is crucial to local AFV market development. At least twenty percent of your coalition’s stakeholders must represent private sector niche market fleets.** Niche market fleets can include taxis, long haul and local delivery fleets, school buses, transit buses, shuttle companies, and airport vehicles. Stakeholders should be identified and invited to participate in Clean Cities planning meetings – **a strong stakeholder and support base is critical to the success of your coalition.**

Stakeholders arrange the initial stakeholder meeting, in coordination with DOE, by first identifying and then arranging for a meeting of transportation, energy, and environmental stakeholders. They typically represent:

- Mayor's office
- City energy and environmental offices
- State energy, transportation, and environmental offices
- Public sector fleet managers and operators
- Private sector fleet managers – with special emphasis on “niche market” fleets
- Local utilities and fuel suppliers
- AFV original-equipment manufacturing companies and local dealers
- Conversion companies
- Trade associations
- Federal agencies, including DOE, GSA, EPA, USPS and DOT
- Vehicle technicians
- Vehicle training entities (universities, vocational educators, etc.)
- Environmental organizations and community groups.

Initial meetings are held to: learn the stakeholders' perspectives and gather support; identify a program coordinator; form a steering committee and working groups; identify the coalition's goals and objectives; and sort out assignments, commitments and specific responsibilities among stakeholders. **It is critical that stakeholders understand their role in the program development process and that programmatic success is driven by commitments to specific action items.**

(2) **The Clean Cities Coordinator**

The coordinator should be a responsible representative with ready access to community decision-makers (e.g., the office of Mayor, City Manager, Chamber of Commerce, etc.).

- The coordinator serves as executive director for the Clean Cities Program.
- The coordinator contacts and works closely with the DOE Regional Support Office (RSO). This office will provide a specialist to support the Clean Cities coordinator and assist with program conception, outreach, implementation, ongoing operation, and identification of funding approaches. (See Appendix E, Points of Contact for DOE RSO phone numbers).

**\* Note\***

To effectively implement the goals and objectives of the coalition, conduct the administrative requirements associated with membership, and meet the day-to-day challenges of coordinating a Clean Cities coalition, the coordinator should be a dedicated, full-time position. Funding the coordinator position is the coalition's

responsibility. DOE does offer limited funding to support a coordinator or staff person through the State Energy Program Special Projects grants. This funding is available only to designated coalitions, or those nearing designation with a program plan on file at DOE headquarters. Funds may also be obtained through private sector grant programs. Hiring a full-time, salaried coordinator is not always feasible, but excellent staff can sometimes be retained on loan from public or private sector entities. When borrowing staff or resources, you can avoid confusion by developing an explicit understanding of the length of commitment (months), the degree of commitment (the percentage of time allotted), and the lines of authority (who will manage the staff). If the position is not funded, the coordinator's employer needs to recognize and approve the scope of work related to the position.

(3) **The Program Plan**

Behind every successful program lies a strategic plan. In this case, the Clean Cities program plan has several purposes. It characterizes the current local AFV market situation, including a description of what the coalition has done so far to jumpstart and develop the market. More importantly, however, the program plan outlines specific goals established by the coalition as well as a detailed plan of action steps, or objectives, that describe how each goal will be attained. **The program plan is the mechanism by which the individual stakeholders make specific commitments to purchase vehicles, invest in refueling infrastructure, provide AFV maintenance and service, educate the community about alternative fuels and AFVs, and participate as members of coalition committees, etc.**

The objectives are essentially a description of stakeholder activities and commitments that, once fulfilled, will help the coalition reach its goals – these individual commitments are the hallmarks of the Clean Cities Program.

A timeline is another essential element that helps to ensure that objectives are met and goals are attained. The program plan also outlines your coalition's organizational structure, including working group or committee descriptions as well as the specific names of each working group member. Additional detail and a description of program plan criteria are included in the pages following this section of the *Roadmap*.

(4) **Program Plan Approval**

Your DOE RSO Clean Cities contact is a valuable resource available to help you and your fellow stakeholders through the program plan development process. Once you have completed a final draft of the plan, it is "officially" submitted in hard copy to the RSO for comment. If, upon a thorough review, your RSO Clean Cities contact feels that your plan does not meet the program's criteria, he or she will return it to you with comments and/or suggestions, and can work with you to resolve any outstanding issues. Once the revisions have been made, the DOE RSO will again review the plan to ensure the modifications are complete, and then will submit the plan, in hard copy, to the national Clean Cities Program Office at DOE Headquarters in Washington, D.C. for final approval. Program plans must be reviewed and receive the approval of the RSO before they are submitted to DOE headquarters.

There is no “set limit” on the number of cities designated into the program – all interested coalitions with a program plan that meets the criteria will be approved for designation. Please be aware, however, that a Clean Cities designation does not happen overnight. Program plan approval can often be a long and involved process. The national Clean Cities staff must be assured of your coalition’s commitment to AFV market development, and confident that the effort will not dwindle after designation. Coalitions often submit several drafts of their plan before it is approved for designation. **The review table used by Clean Cities Program staff to evaluate program plans is provided in Appendix A to ensure all petitioning coalitions understand exactly what is required for designation approval. We strongly encourage you to use this *Roadmap* as your guide, and to work closely with your DOE RSO Clean Cities contact to develop your plan.**

**(5) Memorandum of Understanding**

The completed and approved program plan outlines the coalition’s goals and stakeholder commitments. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the community, coalition, stakeholders, and DOE “certifies” the commitments and goals stated in the program plan. DOE will provide a standard MOU used by Clean Cities coalitions after your program plan has been submitted and you are nearing approval for designation. A sample MOU is provided in Appendix C for reference. The MOU is signed at the designation ceremony and is then included as an addendum to the program plan. An MOU is not a binding contract. It cannot be used to obligate or commit funds, or as the basis for the transfer of funds.

**(6) Designation Ceremony**

If we compare the Clean Cities Program to a road trip, then completing the program plan is like choosing your destination and the routes you will take to get there. Once your program plan has been approved by DOE headquarters, your coalition can start planning the ceremony to commemorate and recognize its designation. Selecting a designation event date can not be done until your program plan has been approved by DOE, and should be a joint effort arranged between your coalition and DOE, to maximize the opportunity to invite high visibility speakers and participants.

The “style” of the designation is up to the coalition. It’s your celebration, so you and your fellow stakeholders determine the event location and its size. Many coalitions will hold their designation ceremony in conjunction with another conference or event to maximize attendance. Some have boasted as many as 400 attendees and have featured such side events as an AFV exposition, luncheon and live musical entertainment. Others have been a more intimate affair of less than 30 attendees gathered at an alternative refueling station in town – it’s up to you.

The event agenda usually consists of speeches from invited participants, followed by the official designation presentation by the presiding DOE representative. Suggested designation ceremony participants can include the governor, mayor, stakeholders, local elected officials, high-level representatives from DOE, and business and industry leaders from the community. The DOE presiding official makes remarks, adds the new city’s

name to the Clean Cities map, and presents a Clean Cities plaque (usually to the mayor), officially designating the area a member of the program. The DOE official will also sign the MOU with stakeholders at the ceremony and present each one with a Clean Cities certificate. In addition to designation ceremony speakers, attendees typically include stakeholder organization representatives; local and state government officials; local business, environmental and industry leaders; and the media.

Appendix D contains the Designation Event and Background Information Request Sheets that each coordinator must submit to DOE headquarters to help prepare the DOE presiding official for the event.

### **Looking beyond your Clean Cities designation...implementing your program plan**

The work doesn't stop after your Clean Cities designation! The *ceremonial* event is just one stop on your road to Clean Cities. The implementation phase is where you reap the rewards of all of the planning and time spent developing your program plan. Your journey continues as you follow through with your objectives, achieve the goals outlined in your program plan, and work to develop your local and regional AFV market.